News
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For Immediate Release
SRR Media contact:
Dean Campbell
803.208.8270
Dean.Campbell@srs.gov

Savannah River Remediation Tank 48 Project achieves major milestone for material procurement

AIKEN, S.C. (February 15, 2011) – Savannah River Remediation LLC (SRR) achieved a major milestone in its work to return to service Tank 48, a 1.3 million gallon waste tank at the Savannah River Site (SRS).

The Tank 48 Treatment Integrated Project Team recently earned approval of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to purchase long lead-time materials to construct the key vessels that will be used to treat radioactive and organic waste in Tank 48. The tank was taken out of service more than a decade ago. Organic material in the waste tank cannot be mixed with other wastes in the Site's other 48 waste tanks.

Carl Lanigan, DOE-Savannah River Federal Project Director for Tank 48, said this milestone marks a major project success and demonstrates that the Tank 48 design has matured, making it possible to procure materials for process equipment.

"The team is charged with the design, fabrication, installation, test and startup of a process to treat waste from Tank 48, allowing Tank 48 to be used more effectively in support of our core mission of closing high-level waste tanks," Lanigan said. "The approval marks the first time the project team will buy hardware to support this initiative."

The approval means the project can now place orders for the production and receipt of specialty alloys for two major process vessels, called the Denitration and Mineralizer Reformer (DMR) and the Product Separation Filter (PSF). The two vessels will work to break down and separate the radioactive and organic materials, which can then be sent to other on-site disposition paths.

The materials involved, called Hastelloy and Inconel, have been selected for their durability and corrosion resistance under the harsh conditions that exist within the Tank 48 equipment. The materials are estimated to cost up to $5 million.

The ability to procure these long-lead items keeps the project on schedule and on budget by supporting the SRR Liquid Waste System Plan Rev. 16, just recently released.

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The technical foundation for the approval is the result of the extensive design work that has gone into the DMR and PSF. The engineering is being performed by an integrated team with work centers at SRS, Aiken, Denver, and Carlsbad, NM. THOR Treatment Technology is the supplier of the design and fabrication of the process system, called a Fluidized Bed Steam Reformer.

In addition, the team is able to use an existing building, known as the Stripper Filter Building, for the Tank 48 work. Reusing the building means the project can move forward without building a new facility.

Jon Lunn, the SRR Tank 48 Project Manager, explained that the integrated team developed a great deal of technical detail around the types of materials needed, how much material will be needed to fabricate the vessels, and how thick the material must be to address the temperatures and pressures the equipment will need to withstand during operation.

“These materials can take months to procure,” Lunn said. “By accelerating these focused DMR and PSF engineering efforts, we are able to procure these materials early. As a result, while a metal factory is busy producing Hastelloy and Inconel, we are working to advance the design in other areas. This process is saving overall time and cost for the project.”

The SRR work was reviewed extensively by the SRR team, DOE team and by a team of subject matter experts from across the DOE complex. The team looked not only at the technical basis but also at the project management and quality programs in place to ensure the decision was needed and the resultant work could be performed with the necessary rigor.

Tank 48 is scheduled to be returned to service by December 2016.

SRS is owned by DOE. SRR is the SRS Liquid Waste contractor. SRR is composed of personnel from a team of companies led by URS with partners Bechtel National, CH2M Hill and Babcock & Wilcox. Critical subcontractors for the contract are AREVA, Energy Solutions and URS Safety Management Solutions.

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